
Cabinet Member for Business, Enterprise and Employment

20th July 2015

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member for Business, Enterprise and Employment – Councillor Maton

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Executive Director of Place

Ward(s) affected:

Wainbody and Westwood

Title:

Petition – Stop the building on Cov Tech sport pitch

Is this a key decision?

No

Executive Summary:

This report responds to a petition containing 537 signatures, which was organised and sponsored by Councillor Marcus Lapsa. The petition requests that the existing Cov Tech sports field at Mitchell Avenue no longer be considered for the provision of new homes as part of the Council's Local Plan.

Recommendations:

The Cabinet Member for Business, Enterprise and Employment is recommended to:

1. Request that the Council's Head of Planning in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Business, Enterprise and Employment has full regard to the requests of the petition alongside other appropriate evidence when developing the Council's new Local Plan. This is with a view to presenting the new Local Plan to Cabinet and Council in October 2015, where final proposals for the Site will be considered.

List of Appendices included:

Appendix 1 - Site plan of the Cov Tech sports field.

Other useful background papers:

Draft Coventry Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) – September 2014:

http://www.coventry.gov.uk/downloads/download/3396/strategic_housing_land_availability_assessment_shlaa

Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

No

Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?

No

Will this report go to Council?

No

Report title:

Petition – Stop the building on Cov Tech sport pitch

1. Context (or background)

- 1.1 A petition has been received by the Council to bring to the attention of the Council that the land currently used by Cov Tech Rugby Club at Mitchell Avenue, Canley is being considered as an opportunity for residential development as part of the Council's new Local Plan. The site is shown edged red on the attached plan ("the Site").
- 1.2 The Site was first highlighted as part of the draft Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), which was published as part of the wider consultation on the Council's draft Local Plan in September 2014. By way of clarification a SHLAA is a technical evidence document that examines potential housing land across the city and supports the Local Plan. Both documents were subject to extensive public engagement between September and December 2014. As part of this process, it was expressed that all sites were only at draft stage and that further evidence was being undertaken and would feed into any final proposals. It was also expressed that no final decision had been made on any site and that the Council remained committed to protecting the most sensitive and highest quality green spaces.
- 1.3 A key part of this evidence review includes assessment of the city's green belt, as the site currently sits within the green belt to the south west of the city. National Guidance dictates that changes to green belt boundaries can only be made through a Local Plan. It is for this reason that the Site requires full consideration through the Local Plan as should it be deemed suitable for development then it will need to be allocated and see a change in green belt boundaries. Likewise, should it be considered inappropriate for development then it will need to be considered within the context of on-going green belt protection.
- 1.4 The development of supporting evidence documents remains on-going at this stage. To support this assessment work, consideration will also be given to the Council's playing pitch strategy (in consultation with the national governing body the Rugby Football Union (RFU) and Coventry Sports Strategy 2014 – 2024. This could potentially involve a relocation and re-provision of the sports pitch within the surrounding area.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 2.1 Due to the importance of considering further evidence and balancing the issues that exist around the Site, it is recommended that the Site be considered through the Council's Local Plan process, having full regard to this petition and additional evidence.
- 2.2 No further options have been considered.

3. Results of consultation undertaken

- 3.1 The Site has previously formed part of a public engagement process relating to the draft SHLAA (September-December 2014). As part of his process a small number of objections were received to the Site specifically, although a far greater number were received in relation to development within the green belt in general.

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

- 4.1 The next stage of the Local Plan is scheduled to be considered at Cabinet and Council in Autumn 2015.

5. Comments from Executive Director of Resources

5.1 Financial implications

There are no direct financial implications of the recommendations in this report, however, as the land in question is currently in the ownership of Coventry City Council, any development of the site would result in the loss of an annual rental income. This would need to be extinguished from the proceeds of any disposal

5.2 Legal implications

In line with the Council's procedure for dealing and responding to petitions, the Council is required to inform the public on how it plans to deal with the petition.

The Site is currently subject to a lease between the Council and the Rugby Club which expires in December 2016. The future renewal of this Lease and the terms of such renewal will depend, in part at least, on the future decisions made through the Local Plan and the club have been offered an extension on the lease until summer 2018 to give them short term security whilst the Local Plan goes through due process. Officers are also investigating relocation options should the site be allocated for housing through the Local Plan exercise.

If a future decision is made to sell or lease the Site then officers are required to ensure that any capital receipt received by the Council from the freehold or leasehold disposal of the Site will satisfy the Council's obligation to obtain best value that can be reasonably obtained under section 123 Local Government Act 1972. In turn officers in Finance and Legal Services will prepare and complete the necessary legal document and collect any capital receipt for the disposal.

Further detail of any legal implications will be reported back to the Cabinet Member (City Development) as appropriate.

6. Other implications

None

6.1 How will this contribute to achievement of the Council's key objectives / corporate priorities (corporate plan/scorecard) / organisational blueprint / Local Area Agreement (or Coventry Sustainable Community Strategy)?

Until such time as a firm recommendation can be made in relation to this Site the full extent of contributions to the Council's key objectives and corporate priorities cannot be confirmed. At this stage the type of contribution will differ depending on the on-going retention of sports provision or its subsequent development for new homes.

6.2 How is risk being managed?

There is not considered to be any risk associated with the Site or the recommendation of this report. Any that could arise in the coming months will be managed directly through the Local Plan process.

6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?

None

6.4 Equalities / EIA

No equality impact assessment has been undertaken in relation to this report. The Local Plan will however be subject to a full Equalities and Consultation Assessment review

6.5 Implications for (or impact on) the environment

None

6.6 Implications for partner organisations?

There are no impacts for partner organisations

Report author(s):

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Legal: Julie Sprayson	Principal Legal Executive Place & Regulatory Team	Resources Directorate	29/06/15	30/06/15
HR: Jasbir Bilen	HR Manager	Resources Directorate	29/06/15	30/06/15
Jonathan Hunt	Development Manager Sport	Place Directorate	09/07/2015	09/07/15
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Members: Councillor Kevin Maton	Cabinet Member for Business, Enterprise and Employment			

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Appendices – Site plan showing the Cov Tech sport field, Mitchell Avenue, Canley.

